

Joseph Polyak 13:32

How safe do you feel in parks compared to other public spaces?

I 13:38

Mmm, compared to other public spaces? Like what other [public spaces] ?

Joseph Polyak 13:49

I guess, streets, restaurants, schools, [and] other places you have public access to.

I 14:00

Mmm, at least in my city, I always felt safe in the park when it was really big, like, I knew my way around. Cuz, I lived there for a while, and I went there with family, cousins, and friends. And for this park [The Monument/ Shadow Falls Park], it was new to me, but I was still surrounded with people I trusted, and like, the people I knew, so I feel like what makes a space feel safe is the people I'm with, because I would probably, like, go with a friend if I'm going again, until I'm actually familiarized with the park.

Joseph Polyak 14:52

So do you feel more unsafe when you're alone in a park?

I 14:57

I think so.

Joseph Polyak 14:58

What do you think might be the cause of that?

I 15:01

Like, you never know what could happen. It's like the .. the common thing with public spaces. Um, and parks are usually big and yeah, anything could happen. [nervous laugh]

Joseph Polyak 15:23

[pause] Do you think you have any identities that affect your feelings with parks, or feelings towards parks?

I 15:32

I mean, like being black, being a woman, definitely are the most, like, visible aspects of my identity that could, like, impact my safety in public spaces. So, I always have this in mind when, like, deciding, "Oh, should I go alone? Should I go with friends?"

Joseph Polyak 16:04

Do you often feel that they do affect your safety?

I 16:06

They do, because, like, usually in public spaces, it's either you get catcalled or called the N word in-in the streets, so it's always one of them, or two of them together. So it's like, aspects to constantly keep in mind.

Joseph Polyak 16:32

Sorry to hear that.

I 16:33

It's ok.

Joseph Polyak 16:34

Is this something that happens frequently?

I 16:36

Yeah [laughs], unfortunately. Um, especially in Paris [where they are from], because it's a big city [with] a lot of people, so the streets is just- some parts to avoid and like, yeah.

Joseph Polyak 16:56

Has it happened much around here?

I 16:57

Actually, here no. I feel like Macalester, and like, the surrounding areas are pretty safe. At least for now. Um, nothing weird happened. Did it? No. OH, nevermind! [laughs] The- yeah, I forgot the -

Joseph Polyak 17:16

Yeah, there was a bit of a historical event that happened. [laughs]

I 17:19

Yeah, uh, nevermind then. Is it the A line, or something? Um ... the other one, the green - the green line? Yeah, s-some people are- yeah, no, nevermind [laughs]. It was, uh, weird interactions, and that, and public transportation here are just generally unsafe, like, it's even worse than in Paris [laughs]. Like as- just like, I was with a friend. But I was like, "there's no way I'm taking public transportation alone in this city."

Joseph Polyak 17:53

What happened?

I 17:54

Like, just a lot of people that are h-high or drunk, and they just make comments, and just like, start talking to you in a weird manner and it just makes you uncomfortable. It was horrible. Like, yeah.

Joseph Polyak 18:12

Sorry to hear that.

I 18:13

It's ok.

Joseph Polyak 18:13

Are there any clear examples of that, or?

I 18:15

Like, the weirdest one was like, I had a lollipop, and there's this random guy that just came and was like, "Can I suck on your lollipop?" And I was like, "Oh my God". [laughs] Or just like, this old man just walked past, stopped, and started staring at me and like, he was just like, "pretty", and then he kept walking, and I was like, "What is this world?" [laughs] Um, and just like, we're inside of the, um, of the bus thingy, and, like, there was a man, like smoking weed. And was just like, "Oh, yeah, follow- follow me on Instagram, follow me on Instagram", and I was just like, "take me out of here." But yeah, public transportation. Definitely. It's a no no here.

Joseph Polyak 19:21

And parks feel significantly safer than that sort of experience?

I 19:24

Yeah, because also I feel like it depends which neighborhood, because you have a lot of like ..., like... , significant differences of safety according to the neighborhood. Because like, I think the neighborhood where we were, like, in, with the park, you had, like, a lot of, like, big houses and

everything, and it's mostly rich. But then, when you go towards like the other parts of Minneapolis and St. Paul, it's like, the poorer gets, the less safe, I feel like. So it's kind of weird, like, the whole dynamic.

...

Joseph Polyak 24:06

This is a question I feel like we've covered fairly, but do you feel as though these identities impact the way you interact with park spaces and other public spaces?

I 24:17

Like I said, it's mostly like ... [in] terms of safety, and like, ways to protect myself as a black woman going into public spaces specifically, especially alone. So, it does impact, like, every day.

Joseph Polyak 24:40

How do you go- how do you go about protecting yourself?

I 24:47

That's when, like, I usually go with people, or like ... I believe I'm strong enough. [laughs] Um, it's always having my location on for my family to- to see I'm sharing my location with, um, my family constantly. I have the emergency like, buttons...

Joseph Polyak 25:22

Do you feel mentally sort of a constant guard or anxiety?

I 25:29

Yeah, it's sometimes just like, looking back and seeing your shadow and you get scared. Um, but yeah, it's like, for example, crossing the street when you see a group of men on one side, or like, just avoiding places where you just feel this sense of unsafety. Like, you try to avoid putting yourself into dangerous situations.

Joseph Polyak 25:59

How do you think this sort of frequent anxiety has been affecting you emotionally? If it has?

I 26:22

Outside, it might affect, like, how I feel, and like, just like, always thinking of what's around me, and being aware of my surroundings. But when I'm in a safe place, usually it's when I can, like, try to like, put my guards down and just like, feel safer, and you know ...